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(By S. T. Stern in People's Magazine.)

"And, when I married you, they said you was a good catch!" There was withering scorn, disdain unutterable, in the tone; and the meek Mr. Tubsy winced under the fierce arraignment. "I didn't say so," he pleaded weakly.

"You didn't say no," returned his wife. "You had your own store, with your name on it; and you let everybody say as how you was a moneyman. Bah!"

"If it comes to that," said Tubsy, "I didn't think about the money part at all. I asked you to be my wife because—well, because I liked you, Becky."

Small softness in the response: "No man," said Becky, severely, "likes his wife who doesn't take good care of her." Thus briefly, did she sum up her philosophy of life.

"There's my sister Hannah. Not half my good looks—not half my beaus. When she married Moe Jacobson, what was he? A plumber's helper! What is he today? Mortimer Jackson, president of a plumber's union, with a hundred thousand dollars and an elevator flat. Hannah gets a new fur coat every winter, and has diamonds all over her!"

"It ain't fair," Tubsy. You sits in your little clothing store just like you did ten years ago. Evenings you wastes your time playing tunes on a little fiddle. All our savings goes to buy junk."

With stiffened finger of scorn, Mrs. Tubsy pointed out the walls of their dingy flat, where hung an unbroken row of pictures and etchings, and the mantelpiece, with its burden of copper and brass bowls and pottery. "Music and punk! Bah!"

"That ain't junk, Betty. That's art. Those bowls are good and beautiful—every one of them. Those pictures are fine. It ain't me you're fighting with, Becky. If it wasn't for Hannah, now, with her diamonds and her fancy flat!"

"Sh-h!" Mrs. Tubsy placed a monitory finger against her nose, as the clatter of footsteps sounded on the stairway outside. "There's someone coming."

Enter Hannah Jackson, decked out in all the finery that her ample person permitted. On her head there towered a veritable millinery creation, smothered

in green plumage. Across her shoulders there was flung, with careful carelessness, a gray fur cape. In her hand she carried a gold purse. Around her pudgy fingers there gleamed concentric circles of glittering stones. From her neck there depended a flimsy chain, carrying a twinkling diamond dagger.

Mrs. Tubsy took her in, from heel to crown, in a single sweep. "Hannah Jackson," said she, reprovingly, "you gets more extravagant every day. You'll bust your husband yet, higher'n a kite. Me and Sam lives different. Only this morning he wanted to buy me a new coat, and I says: 'No, Sam, don't waste it on me. Buy one of them beautiful brass bowls!'"

"And I will, too," chirped Sam, in instant acquiescence. "There is a bowl now in the window of Yonkof Makury that I'm sure I can pick up dead cheap."

"Brass and pictures! Not for mine." By way of gesticulation Hannah waved her bejeweled hands. What's the use? D'ye see this piece. She held out the dagger. "Cost Mortie three hundred—worth twice as much of anybody's coin. Mortie is a wonder, I tell you. He made this dagger in fifteen minutes out of Silver Mary."

"Silver Mary. Who's she?" This from the Tubsys in unison.

"Oh, it's a mining-stock. It's a bonanza. Mortie bought a lot of the stuff about two months ago. Got it for a tra-la-la. The feller behind the deal cleared a cool million. Say, Sam—there's your chance. Buy Becky some Silver Mary. It's five dollars a share, now; you can get it at Willie Adler's broker office in Wall Street. There's lots of new flats up town, with marble in the vestibules. You don't have to stay down here in Henry Street with the greenhorns."

"There," put in Sam's wife. "What did I tell you?"

"I knew it, Becky. I knew that spiel of yours about the bowls and the pictures was only for company. Make him do it. They struck a new vein in Silver Mary last week. Get in quick."

On Hannah's departure, Mrs. Tubsy's first inquiry concerned itself with the size of her husband's bank account.

One hundred dollars comprised his spare cash. He likewise vouchsafed the opinion that Silver Mary was no fit depository for his savings, no matter how many diamond daggers Hannah wore.

"No!" snarled Becky. "I suppose you'd like to buy a naked lady, with some blue trees and a gold frame—or, maybe, another of them bowls."

"But you told Hannah you asked me to."

"Sam, you're a fool. Are we always going to live down here in five nasty rooms, while Hannah sits on a plush lounge in a velvet dress? You'll be breaking my heart yet, Tubsy." With this came tears.

Tubsy succumbed. He promised to buy twenty shares of Silver Mary, but admonished his wife that, in case of loss, she must not complain.

"Do I ever kick?" asked Mrs. Tubsy, sweetly.

Repentance followed hard upon victory. Sorrowfully, she stood at the window and gazed after her husband as he trudged slowly down the street. Had she not been too severe? After all, he was Sam, her husband. Really, now, he tried to do his best. Well, she would make an extra fine supper that evening. All of Sam's culinary favorites should be included, as proof positive of her atonement.

Across the melting mood there floated a vision of Hannah and her new diamond dagger. Whew! Sam was stupid—lazy, unambitious. No, there should be no feast at all—at least, none until he had earned it. He must get rich for her sake.

Meanwhile, the subject of her thoughts found his way to the bank where, with a heavy sigh, he drew one hundred dollars. There was small delight in seeing all that money going to waste in wild speculation, when, in the window of Makury, the metal dealer, there reposed a brass bowl the most beautiful his eyes had ever beheld. Women were silly creatures, after all. Becky was no better than the rest. Dress and diamonds, indeed!

The next event in Sam's career he places to the credit of fate. In point of fact, there is no other explanation for the marvel.

Geographically, Wall Street, whither his next errand tended, lies far to the south of Sam's bank, and somewhat to the west. Makury's shop stands to the east, and a bit towards the north. Sam is quite sure that he turned his steps westward; at least, his memory treasures no other course of locomotion. And yet, of a sudden, he found himself in front of Makury's window, with the wonderful brass bowl staring him boldly out of countenance.

"You beauty!" he murmured. In the throes of his longing, Becky and Silver Mary were relegated without a qualm, to the limbo of forgotten things.

Tubsy, prospective speculator, has vanished. It is Tubsy, the art collector, who marches into the store and presents himself to the head of the establishment.

"Say, Yonkof, you've got an old brass pot in your window that I might use for a few flowers. It's almost too big. Maybe you've got a littler one. If you haven't, how much do you want for that thing in the window?" Thus speaks accumulated instinct through the lips of the lover of the beautiful.

"Thing, eh?" Makury knows his customers; Sam and his blundering methods he knows, perhaps, best of all. He is no lover of the beautiful; he is merely a humble shekel-gatherer, to whom brass bowls mean house rent and supper.

"It's a thing, is it? And maybe you want a smaller one. Say, Sam—I've got them all kinds and sizes. What's the use? You want that one. But you can't have it. There was a gentleman here this morning, and he offered me forty dollars for it. I refused. He comes again tomorrow, or next week."

Part of this was true. The size only of the offer suffered from hyperbole. The customer had offered ten, and Yonkof was holding out for twenty.

A panic of fear seized Tubsy, as he saw the coveted bowl slipping from his grasp. "I'll give you forty, Yonkof—spot cash."

"No, Sam. Say fifty, and the bowl is yours. I am sure, if you buy, the gentleman will buy it back from you, and give you a handsome profit. It's money out of my pocket to give it to you for fifty."

"Can't do it, Yonkof," says Sam, with new calmness; for he has spied the horizon of demand, and knows the bowl is already his. "Forty-five—not a penny more."

They closed the bargain at that. It is difficult to say which was the better pleased—Yonkof with his added profit, or Sam at this exhibition of a new-found shrewdness. Whatever its degree, the thrill of the metal-dealer must have lasted the longer; for, as soon as Sam regained the street, Becky, and Silver Mary came back to him. His hundred dollars had dwindled almost to half its bulk!

In vain did he endeavor to reassure himself by repeating over and over

again: "I don't care! I don't care! I don't care!" Each repetition brought its added spasm of fear.

At last, in dire confusion, he walked all the way to Wall Street, with the bowl in his arms, and presented himself at the broker's office, with a request that they deliver to him fifty dollars' worth of Silver Mary, and be quick about it.

A smug clerk smiled paternally at him. Sam was duly informed that Silver Mary stocks were legion in number. There was Silver Mary number one, Silver Mary Number two, Silver Mary consolidated, Silver Mary extension, and Silver Mary exploration. Which did he seek?

Sam was completely ignorant on the subject, but refused to show it. "Give me," said he, carelessly, "some Silver Mary number two."

"All right," was the response. "Number two is two and a half dollars a share. Fifty dollars gives you twenty shares."

Twenty shares—the luck of it! Becky need never know. In sheer delight, Sam hugged the brass bowl as he realized that it was all clear profit. On his way home he placed the bowl in his office-safe, and carried the shares in his overcoat pocket. Thus did he express his sense of relative values.

Becky met him at the door. "Did you get the Silver Mary?"

"I did. Twenty shares, Becky. Count them—count them carefully. I hope they'll bring you luck."

Becky took the shares and hid them.

That night Sam took out his little fiddle and scattered soft music through the dingy rooms. Had his improvisations ever been published, it is certain that they would have borne the title: "Song to a Brass Bowl."

Becky sat sullenly by, and listened without a word of comment. A diamond dagger had pierced her heart.

As time rolled on and the worldly affairs of Mr. Samuel Tubsy did not improve, Becky's hoard of the bowls and pictures grew and grew. In them she divined the cause of her continued poverty. Day after day she looked at them, and her hands itched towards their destruction.

"I know what I'll do," she promised herself, at last. "I'll sell them—every one of them."

Fortune seemed to favor the resolution. That very afternoon, Makury called, bringing with him a tall "gentle gentleman," as Becky said, who